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January 27, 2016

To: Dennis Rosenbaum, Rosenbaum and Watson  
Amy Watson, Rosenbaum and Watson

From: Kathleen D. Saadat, COCL Liaison/COAB Chair

RE: Role of PPB Advisors on Community Oversight Advisory Board

I am concerned at the prospect of changing the Portland Police Bureau Advisors relationship to the Community Oversight Advisory Board by having PPB attend subcommittee meetings only when requested. The impact of such a change would have a negative effect on the functioning of the COAB, the viability of the work of the COAB and the credibility of the PPB.

**IMPACT ON FUNCTIONING OF THE COAB:**

The role of the Portland Police Bureau COAB members is that of advisors to the voting members of the COAB. The COAB work of making recommendations on policy, is dependent upon work done in subcommittees. This is the primary reason to have PPB Advisors involved at the subcommittee level. It is in subcommittees that information is presented, discussed by both the voting and non-voting members of the COAB, and the public. Proposals are then voted upon by voting COAB members and if passed, forwarded to the full COAB for discussion and vote. In this process, issues and questions that may arise, cannot always be pre-determined. Issues or questions may occur "in the moment" and need a timely response from a PPB Advisor. Further, PPB Advisors often have background information and/or opinions that are also helpful to the group as it explores options. In the midst of a dynamic discussion regarding policy, it would be disruptive and cumbersome to have to postpone a discussion and/or decision until an Advisor could come to the (next) meeting. To manage the COAB this way will confuse and slow the process and will fail to create a milieu within which the voting and non-voting members begin to build (in this microcosm) the trust the public and the PPB hope to build in the macrocosm of the broader Portland community.

**IMPACT ON VIABILITY OF COAB WORK PRODUCT:**

In order for the work of the COAB to have legitimacy with Portland Police Officers, there must be a sense that the COAB has worked **with** the PPB in the development of recommendations. To have credibility with the public, there must be a sense that PPB has worked willingly with the COAB. The presence of Advisors helps convey that sense. The COAB as a body, received little or no direction on how to implement the expectation that voting and non-voting members work together on this board. Some members believed the COAB's role was to investigate incidents and make recommendations for discipline, others regardless of the side with which they identify, simply have not trusted the "other" group. Input from PPB Advisors, voting COAB members and the public, help subcommittees engage in creative exploration and consideration of ways to improve the way PPB carries out its mission and understand the impact of policy on communities and officers. Without this mix, this effort will fail. Neither the PPB nor the Portland Community will have faith in recommended changes. The Community Engagement Plan, a required product of the SA will have little meaning if representatives of PPB and PDX communities are not visibly engaged in the process at all levels.

**IMPACT ON CREDIBILITY OF THE PPB**

The Portland Police Bureau, a public institution, expressed commitment to change the ways it does business, especially the ways in which it interacted with Portland residents experiencing mental health issues. Portland residents also raised issues of how PPB officers interact with people from other marginalized groups, with race as another category of public concern. The City of Portland Settlement Agreement with the DOJ, codifies the City's roadmap to insuring changes in the PPB. The Settlement Agreement outlines many of the steps to be taken in the process of change, one element of which is the establishment of the COAB with PPB Advisors. COAB members represent a

spectrum of experience and knowledge. Working with these community representatives, PPB officers get to play the role of both teachers and students. This interaction, in and of itself serves as a model for working together.

To change the relationship of the PPB Advisors to the COAB as described, makes it appear that PPB has "left the room". Such a move suggests that PPB finds it too hard to work with the people they are sworn to serve and protect. This image creates a public relations problem for the Portland Police Bureau. It will appear as though PPB is not prepared to engage in the difficult conversations necessary for public involvement in institutional change to occur. It raises the question of PPB's ability to work with members of the larger community, especially those who often prove more difficult than the people that sit around the COAB table. It suggests that PPB has no commitment to changing the PPB. If PPB representatives cannot work with COAB, what would make the public believe that PPB can work effectively with the broader community?

**THOUGHTS/OBSERVATIONS:**

There are still role clarification and communication issues in this **new** endeavor. The "Storming, Forming, Norming" processes described in studies of group dynamics, are real and can take months to resolve themselves. The COAB was allowed to "storm" for over six months without being given a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all involved. As late as June of 2015, there were few policies or procedures developed to help guide the processes of the Board. These issues are being addressed and there is steady improvement in the functioning of the Board and the interaction between voting and non-voting members of the COAB. There is a concomitant increase in the frequency of requests by voting COAB members to hear opinions and suggestions from Advisors. Providing the Board information on roles and responsibilities, developing organizational structures, and encouraging COAB members to recognize themselves as doing important work, combined with a recent successful retreat, have helped improve the overall dynamic.

PPB Advisors need help in understanding how to separate the call for institutional reform from their sense of being judged as individuals. They need a better understanding of the history of policing in the US/Portland. They should be helped to understand what they represent when they walk into a room in a uniform, and how to effectively respond to the reality of being stereotyped. COAB members need to learn that many of them are in fact, stereotyping the PPB, how that is wrong and how that defeats the purpose of their work on the COAB.

This experiment in involving a community in the process of institutional change serves as a model for how PPB and Portland residents can work together for the betterment of our City. This is not something from which the PPB can withdraw (this would appear to be withdrawal) without consequences, the most immediate of which will be further loss of credibility with the public. Both PPB officers and COAB members need to understand the magnitude of the task and their great responsibility to the public. Meanwhile, we must all do what is necessary to help the PPB Advisors stay in the room and contribute to a successful outcome.

Cc Ellen Osoniach  
Mike Marshall  
Jared Hager  
Portland COCL office

ARTICLES ON ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSITION  
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<http://managementconsultingnews.com/interview-william-bridges/>

<https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/bridges-transition-model.htm>

[http://www.moravian.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Bridges\\_Transition\\_Model.pdf](http://www.moravian.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Bridges_Transition_Model.pdf)

<http://www.c4npr.org/clientuploads/Managing%20Up/CompassPoint%20Presentation%20-%20Leading%20Organizational%20Change.pdf>

<http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1235&context=cahrswp>

One of these articles refers to the Ten Poems to Change Your Life. Here is the list of those ten poems. I have not read them all.... Don't want things to change too fast. 😊

"The Journey" by Mary Oliver  
"Last Night as I Was Sleeping" by Antonio Machado  
"Song of Myself" by Walt Whitman  
"Zero Circle" by Rumi  
"The Time Before Death" by Kabir  
"Ode to My Socks" by Pablo Neruda  
"Last Gods" by Galway Kinnell  
"For the Anniversary of My Death" by W. S. Merwin  
"Love After Love" by Derek Walcott  
"The Dark Night" by St. John of the Cross